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ABSTRACT

Theorizing about evaluation should be conceptualized as a human activity governed by certain strategies and principles. The theories advanced by various evaluators have changed over the years, thus illustrating ten principles of evaluation. The starting point for theory development or modification is self-reflection and review of one's own writings. Public conceptions of a theory are based upon publications describing it; different conceptions are possible. Theoretical formulations are subject to continual change. Other principles suggest major factors for modifying evaluation theory. At conference symposia, for example, an evaluation theory can be interpreted by colleagues, and compared and contrasted to other theories; here also, evaluators can learn to understand contrasting arguments and to challenge or extend inferences. Another phase in evaluation theory development becomes possible when theory consolidation or theory categorization takes place. Other factors influencing theory development include field based experience, and interaction with colleagues who have compatible points of view. Finally, evaluation theory development is conditioned by human beings and their associations, motivations, intuitions, and imaginations. (GDC)

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THE HUMAN ACTIVITY OF EVALUATION THEORIZING

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The Human Activity of Evaluation Theorizing

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The literature is replete with numerous attempts at developing so-called "theories" of evaluation, with applications of these theories, and critiques or comparisons of them. This paper is not concerned with examining or criticizing an evaluation theory or even groups of theories. Rather, the focus of this paper is a consideration of various strategies that people properly follow when they are engaged in evaluation theorizing.

WHY EXAMINE EVALUATION THEORIZING?

Why is it important to engage in the activity of examining evaluation theorizing? We feel that the primary benefit to be gained from careful analysis of evaluation theorizing, per se, will be the significant insights provided into the nature of evaluation theory development. Through such increased understanding of theorizing, a theorist will acquire a heightened ability to personally engage in theory construction more reflectively, carefully, and probably more successfully. A further benefit, derived from an inquiry into evaluation theorizing, is a better understanding of the nature of evaluation theory generally and of the various evaluation theories.

An example may help to illustrate this general point. While persons developing a theory usually base their formulation on tentative conjectures,

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others reading the theory may have the impression that certain issues are quite settled. The tentativeness is usually lost to readers who may not regard the issue in that way. An analysis of evaluation theorizing draws attention to the process by which theories evolve, and as a result it calls attention the tentativeness of most evaluation theory statements. And here we refer to the tentativeness as felt by the theorist himself.

What we set as our task in this paper is, then, to draw out some of the special features of the human activity of evaluation theorizing. It must be stressed, of course, that our work is only a first step. Like any activity, this activity of evaluation theorizing can be elucidated in terms of its ends. In this case the end is a definable theory of evaluation.[1] It is our contention that, in carrying out the process of evaluation theory building, there are several strategies and principles which are useful in guiding one's theorizing. Our essay here is a step towards providing a comprehensive examination of those strategies and principles.

Part of the data base for the examination of the strategies and principles of theorizing is to be found in our experiences and observation of the evolution of various evaluation theoretic positions. In part, some of our findings are derived from the comments of evaluation theorists who participated in a 1978 AERA Symposium Session. In that

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[1] There are many forms of theories and different kinds of theory. For example, there are both descriptive and normative evaluation theories. Thus one shouldn't suppose without further argument that all evaluation theorists are pursuing the same ends. It could be that they are talking about different aspects of evaluation; it could also be that only the shared use of the term 'evaluation' ties them together.

session a set of papers were presented in which some persons "reconstructed" the views of Egon Guba, Robert Rippey and Robert Wolf, and posited the change of evaluation views that those theorists might have had as a consequence of reading a particular philosophical treatise, (The New Rhetoric by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca). The theorists themselves provided responses to the papers. Many of the strategies and principles we will mention today were drawn from the discussion among these evaluation theorists and role players.[2]

When we refer to sets of strategies and principles which comprise evaluation theorizing we do not mean to imply a system akin to formal logic. Informal logic might be more fitting; perhaps the set should simply be called the canons of rational theorizing. Given that the end is to develop a justifiable theory, a person will find that certain principles and strategies offer rational guidance towards it.[3]

Let us begin with a very general observation. During the various stages of the activity, a person's theory is best thought of as a loosely interwoven collection of beliefs, assumptions, expectations, aspirations attachments, obligations, preferences and perceptions. Even at the point that ideas are written down, fluidity and tentativeness are more characteristic than the rigidity and fixedness that one associates with a system of formal logic (or with a well-tested empirical theory.)

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[2]It is our contention that theorists, in a sense, are familiar with the strategies and principles. Our task is to make what is implicit, explicit, so that they can be more effective in guiding theorizing.

[3]We do not mean to imply from all of the preceding discussion that theorizing is a purely intellectual activity. The disposition to consider criticism and the readiness to change one's theory when the evidence demands it are important to the activity. Courage, openness, and even persistence may well be important virtues here.

Furthermore, though two theorists may share the same beliefs, and perceptions, they may well disagree elsewhere. And it is important to notice such disagreements.

(a) One may regard a matter as resolved, the other as tentative, with respect to certain standards of evidence and argumentation.

(b) One may regard a matter as essential, the other as peripheral.

(c) One may hold that a certain kind of relationship exists between the ideas; the other may hold another kind.

In general, unless explicit care is taken, the distinction between "tentative" and "resolved" and the distinction between "essential" and "peripheral" are left unclarified. Without a strenuous effort at reconstruction, the reader is likely to suppose that all the beliefs and perceptions expressed by the writer are fixed, resolved, and quite essential. This supposition is likely to misconstrue the theorist's position in a significant way.

The Role of Writing

As we have said earlier, a writer's theory is a loosely interwoven system of beliefs and perceptions about evaluation. What a writer believes or perceives to be his theory of evaluation is in a real sense somewhat unknown to him. For it is extremely difficult to organize, systematize, substantiate, and to criticize one's system of beliefs and perceptions. In fact, it is the written statement of a theory which is best used for examination and reformulation of theoretical positions.

Accordingly, it is recommended that a serious writer should arrange to get his beliefs and perceptions down on paper. He should strive to formulate the key ideas, directions, and problems, giving as much of the rationale from his beliefs as he can. Of course, this working note-book will prepare the writer to communicate his beliefs and perceptions to other writers. Here we want to point out that the working note-book will enable a writer himself to get better control of his beliefs and perceptions. Thereby, he will be in a better position to understand and to criticize his own theorizing. In so doing, he will be engaged in justifiable theorizing.

A plausible starting point for evaluation theory development requires that theorists gain adequate control of their own written views.[4] When one first tries to understand a theory it is necessary to stay as close as possible to the way it is written--in fact, the first examination of a theoretic position consists of attempts at paraphrasing and characterising the written views. Now, if it is one's own theory that is being examined, the starting point is self reflection or review of previous writings; people often don't have control of the central themes of their own views. This then, is the first principle:

> Principle 1: The starting point for theory development or modification is the examination by the Theorist of the formulations of that theory.

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[4]The reason that this is only a plausible or possible starting point is that theoreticians may start with a problem or hypothesis which is apparently unrelated and only later on work back to relating the hypothesis or the new idea to the theoretic position.

Various Perceptions

A writer's public statements and papers are likely to be perceived by different people in different ways. The general public, say, may perceive them in one way, while the writer perceives them in another. (Needless to say, students often have different perceptions from both of these.)

It may not be supposed that the writer is always the ultimate authority on what his public pronouncements say. In some cases his public statements and papers may express a belief or perception which he never intended to express. Continued differences of interpretations of his writings may well lead him to reconsider his statements and papers to see if he had misstated his position.

Often a writer is interested in making sure that different groups of people understand at least in rough ways what his position is so that such people may accept it.[5] But, the writer can also use such a public understanding as a basis for critical review of his theory. If he is committed to espousing his perceptions and beliefs to just criticism, then, as a first step he must help the reader to understand it adequately. Many opportunities for serious, intellectual discussion abort because the participants have failed to understand one another. This leads us to Principle 2.

> Principle 2: A public conception of a theory is based primarily upon publications describing that theory, but different conceptions are possible.

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[5] It is important to note that we have characterized the writer's theory as what he believes or perceives it to be. When we talk about a theoretical position of someone, we are talking about the beliefs and perceptions of relationships that he holds. Ultimately, of course, the person's beliefs, perceptions and perceived relations must be submitted to rational defense.

This principle was clearly illustrated in the previously mentioned symposium. The several persons charged with the task of reconstructing the theoretic positions of Guba, Rippey and Wolf, become thoroughly "familiar" with the writings of "their" theorist. In fact, the papers (Alkin, 1979) were strong attestations that, for these writers, the theorists were represented in total by their written formulations. What is regarded as the person's theory is often the common interpretation of the meaning of the written statement. In fact, such a view of the theory may not express the intentions of the theorist at the time of writing nor his current views.[6]

The symposium papers provided numerous examples of the tendency of readers to view a theorist's position in terms of his writings. In fact, theorists are usually personified by their own written words. Richard Daillak in discussing the utility of Wolf's judicial evaluation model said, "I have often commented on the need to include human judgement as a source of evidence in evaluation and policy decision making (e.g. Wolf, 1973, 1975)..." Coming to see the other person's point of view is often accomplished by taking on his point of view.

Elaine Lindheim relied on Egon Guba's published work to reconstruct the educator and his confrontation with the new Rhetoric (TNR): "My basic definition of evaluation has not changed since reading this book.

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[6]Interestingly, the one person who had opportunity to enter into personal discussion with a theorist prior to writing the paper was perceived by that theorist as being too firmly rooted in his written statements and not sufficiently cognizant of his current actual position.

Evaluation is the process of obtaining and providing useful information for making educational decisions. (My 1970 article, "Evaluation During Development,"....states this definition.)" She further states, in taking Guba's point of view, "my evaluation model focuses upon the decision-maker as the central determinant in why and how any information is gathered..." What she regards as the view of Egon Guba turns out to be an historical artifact, for the theorist himself responds, "I am not the 'real' Egon Guba. That Egon Guba was the one working and writing seven to 10 years ago...The real Egon Guba of 1978...is really quite different from what Elaine has suggested."[7]

The Role of Time

The fact that conceptions of theoretic positions are viewed as fixed in the written word, provides us with a serious problem. For, as we have demonstrated in the previous example, theoretical viewpoints are not fixed and are ever changing. The problem evolves partly from the natural lethargy of theorists; it takes time to rewrite theoretical formulations. There is also a lag time in publications. Thus, it should not be assumed that the theorist's written views are, in fact, necessarily their current theoretic positions. Thus, another element in theory development may be referred to as the principle of continual development.

[7]Later in his talk Guba explains the main reason why Lindheim's reconstruction of "him" is so far from his actual position. "You of course have no way of knowing about that new posture from a reading of my published work. Little of my present position has found its way into the literature."

Principle 3: Theoretical formulations are subject to continual development or change. (Cor: An adequate elucidation of a person's viewpoint must make reference to the time at which he held that view.)[8]

In the symposium papers, Wolf indicated that his theories were evolving and being refined overtime. In speaking of cross-validation processes he indicated that "for the last three years, I have continued to refine the operationalization of natural inquiry strategies which demonstrate powerful applicability to an elaboration of inferences and explanations." Guba more clearly than any of the other theorists who participated in this seminar, demonstrates how one's beliefs and perceptions change over time. "I find myself this morning...trying to make the present state of my mind appear to be perfectly consistent with my former position...even though I know it is not." He sympathized with Lindheim's problems in trying to characterize "his position". "If...she had some problems in understanding what Egon Guba was like, I presently share her dilemma, my mind has changed about so many things that it is hard for me to recall what opinions I held then." In fact, his whole theoretical framework has changed, though he is not surprised by this fact. "It should not, after all, be so surprising that my thinking has changed a bit over 10 years...we all reserve the right

[8]A corollary prescription is associated with this principle. Since theories will change over time, theorists should expect that such changes are going to occur and in some way start to reflect upon them, map them out and insure that they are going to be as conscious as they can about the changes in their views. The advantage of this are twofold. One, of course, is that theorists would have more conscious control over or awareness of their own thinking. Secondly, the provision of direction and order to the changes as they occur may provide more hypotheses about a theory and subsequently, new insights.

to change our minds. Hopefully, in this case, it is because my thinking has matured."[9]

The Strategy of Theory Confrontation

The theoretic positions which have been expounded and presented in writing are often modified based upon a variety of confrontation stimuli. The view by Guba that his thinking has matured over time is an indication that a wide variety of stimuli have forced a reconsideration and reexamination of his theoretical positions. What are the nature of these confrontation stimuli?

Confrontation with One's Own Theory. Public disavowals of one's prior theoretic views hardly ever take place. Theoretic viewpoints once expounded and put forth usually only get modified in the mind of the theorizer and don't get explicated, in writing or verbally, until the theorizer is publicly confronted with his previous theoretic position. Confrontation with a prior written statement of a theoretic position may take place either through someone else questioning elements of the written theory (or describing or reacting to the theory) or through one's own re-reading and recollecting what it was that he had to say.

The presentation and description of theorists views by other parties provides perhaps the best opportunity for theorists to reconsider and reconstruct their own thoughts. When faced with the portrayal of reconstruction of one's views, theorists frequently are impelled to consider whether the portrayal is correct or not. By doing this, it may lead them to stand by their position, to re-interpret the position put forward, or to show how evaluation theoretic views have been modified through the years.

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[9] It becomes apparent then that a historical view of the author's work is quite useful in examining the development of a theory.

There are distinct advantages in having theoretic positions reconstructed by others rather than having the particular theorist do it himself. Authors might be inclined to read new meanings into their work saying that it expresses what they really meant, or they might fail to see the discontinuity between earlier and later writings. Portrayers react only to written materials as they might generally be interpreted by the public. Portrayal of one's evaluation theory by others often leads to stark interpretations--perhaps different from what theorists thought they had said or from views currently held. This leads us to a consideration of Principle 4.

Principle 4: Confrontation with previously written theoretic positions is a major basis for modification of evaluation theories.

It might be suggested that we are implying that a linear progression takes place in systematic theory development. On the contrary, we claim that the nature of theory development as it actually occurs within the real world context in evaluation (as well as in other fields), is neither systematic nor linear. There is not a constant review and constant stimuli from confrontation with prior written theoretic positions. In that respect, the 1978 symposium was unique. It presented the opportunity for various authors to be confronted with their past writings and to contrast them to their present views. The theorists were given the opportunity to determine "how" these various view related to each other and to contrary views of evaluation as well as to ponder the defensibility of prior written theoretic positions. Note again that certain

attitudes were involved here, too. The participants have to be willing and committed to a kind of rational discussion of their views. Without this, the confrontation with one's prior position would prove useless.

A corollary prescription is identified--the symposium prescription. There ought to be regularly scheduled confrontation-type symposia related to evaluation theories. (Not gentle, delicate, symposia, not "survey" sessions, not theory application symposia, not information distribution sessions, but confrontation symposia that are designed to confront theorists with specifically reconstructed perceptions of their own work.)

An examination of the confrontation between Lindheim's statement of Guba's views and Guba's conceptions of his theoretical view proved insightful. Confronted with Lindheim's clear statement of his previous position and its relationship to the ideas of TNR, Guba tries to understand what caused him to abandon those ideas. In so doing, he elaborates some underlying assumptions that were previously unclear to him and to his readers. "I certainly would not find in TNR today corroboration for a definition of evaluation as a process of servicing decisions...such a formulation is based on assumptions which, although not clear to me in 1967 are now evident and now found by me to be nonpersuasive. What are some of these untenable assumptions? ... that there is a decision authority, ... that decisions are made in some explicit way, ... that there is a decision time, etc."[10]

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[10] What is not clear from this interchange is whether Guba's statement of the "discovery" of previously held unsound assumptions was a direct response to Lindheim or whether he had become aware of these assumptions at a prior time and is merely acknowledging the fact at this time. Nevertheless, the confrontation serves as an impetus for his making his (possibly) private reconsiderations public and available for scrutiny.

Confrontation with other theories. In order to understand as fully as possible one's own views, it is often helpful to compare and to contrast it with someone else's theories. By noting the differences and the similarities among theoretical viewpoints, one is likely to come to see the strengths and limitations of each of them. Furthermore, by comparing and contrasting, one is more likely to arrive at hypotheses for the consolidation of differing viewpoints, for the rejection of certain views, or for the invention of new ones to fill obvious gaps. Considering another's theory, then, may well help to develop one's own theory to bring about a better theory. This is the basis for Principle 5.

> Principle 5: Confrontation with the written theoretic positions on evaluation is a major basis for modification of evaluation theories.

This principle is clearly demonstrated in many of the evaluation theory papers prevalent in the field. Cronbach and Scriven's work have formed the foundation for much of the formulations of evaluation theorists at a more specific level. It is obvious that Alkin's early writings on evaluation were influenced by Stufflebeam's thinking.

A further example of reliance on the written theoretic positions of other evaluators is provided by statements made by House during the aforementioned AERA symposium. He noted: "...I set about trying to embody the Perelman ideas and other ideas, and to put them in a form that we would find recognizable in the evaluation field. I went to the works of some of the saints in the field--Cronbach and Campbell--and looked at their

stuff, knowing that they have been moving in this direction. I used their writings as a kind of a jump-off into some of the Perelman reason reasoning." Furthermore, House notes: "...although Egon was renouncing his earlier self of years ago, I feel differently. In fact that earlier self, the Egon Guba of 10 years ago, was a very important part of what contemporary evaluation is now... We evaluation theorists have played off his ideas (and of others) to get the ideas we now have."

Principle 5, then, stresses the value to one's theorizing of being confronted by the viewpoints of others on the nature of evaluation. It may come as a surprise to some, however, that the evaluation theorist may also profit greatly be being confronted with a theory on something other than evaluation. It may be useful for a theorist to take a model or method which has proved useful in the inquiry into other matters and try to incorporate it into his theory of evaluation. For example, a theorist might hypothesize that it would be insightful to think of educational evaluation as a kind of legal reasoning and evidence gathering or as a kind of decision making. The metaphor of the legal system was an important basis for Wolf's writings; and, the writings of Braybrooke and Lindblom were an important stimulus to the work of Stufflebeam.

Alternatively, theorists need not take on nor assume the models or methods of others, but may compare and contrast them with their own theories of evaluation in order to gain further insights into their own work. This leads to the formulation of Principle 6:

Principle 6: Confrontation with written theoretic positions on matters other than evaluation is a major basis for modification of evaluation theories. (Such theoretic positions will be called "external" theories)

Several of the presentations in the symposium about which we have been reporting illustrate this principle very well. Wolf's reaction to the external theory formulation (TNR) is to reaffirm some of his own theoretical positions. He maintained that TNR placed too much emphasis on "argumentation without a clear articulation of how argumentative skills can benefit the field of educational evaluation." On the other hand, he feels that his own judicial evaluation model "allows for the juxtaposition of those different viewpoints and different interpretations of evidence" within a structure that provides for cross-validation and cross-checking. In this way, "argumentation and persuasion become illuminating rather than obfuscating." Yet even while denying the value of TNR's argumentative emphasis, Wolf entertains some new ideas prompted by the rhetorical classifications and discussions of TNR: "The essence of good evaluation therefore, should not rely upon the skills of argumentation because we already employ those kinds of skills, often to the disservice of clients or program consumers. More useful skills would be learning how to understand the significance of contrasting arguments and how to challenge or extend inferences and explanations."

In the same symposium, Rippey noted that he was strongly influenced by some of the ideas discussed in TNR. He found marked similarities between some of his own ideas about transactional evaluation and some

of the ideas expressed.

> "I really appreciated Perelman and Olbrects-Tyteca's delineation of the differences among impartiality, objectivity, partisanship, fanaticism and skepticism. I have always lacked patience with evaluators who let projects sink in order to maintain objectivity. ...What they are saying (in TNR) is that the evaluator should not be a voyeur. If he is not a member of the team, he will not be able to speak with authority because commitment and intimacy will be lacking. The objective evaluator is as much disqualified for his remoteness as the project director for his partisan bias."

The theoretical concept that had the greatest impact on Rippey was the idea of a "community of minds" first, Rippey relates this idea to his previous work. "One of the most profound concepts I found in TNR was the necessity of establishing a community of minds prior to argumentation.... Perhaps the evaluator, who is usually in the position of advocate whether he likes it or not, needs to spend more time establishing a community of minds committed to argumentation before he begins his work. I have previously advocated the use of project monitoring committees made up of both protagonists and the antagnonists of proposed inovations."

Apparently, Rippey believed, prior to the symposium, that any protagonist or antagonist should be allowed to be on the committee. Now he feels, that a stronger condition must be satisfied in order for a person to be on one of these monitoring committees--basically, he must join or be a member of the community of minds. In other words, Rippey began to question the composition of monitoring committees--an issue which had not been fully addressed in his prior theoretical formulations. Rippey regards this issue as a hypothesis or as conjecture to be tested

out or to be extended by further work. He noted, "I am anxious to explore the effects of the establishment of such a community of minds...perhaps there is no point in proceeding before this has been done." The general point about evaluation theory development that we are drawing from this example is that while reading books in related fields one is often confronted with an idea which becomes a hypothesis in his own field of inquiry. This promising lead deserves further elaboration and the theorist prepares to take steps to test out and gather evidence for or against its inclusion in the theorists previously established conceptual framework.

Confrontation with Consolidation and Categorizations. Another phase in evaluation theory development becomes possible when theory consolidation or theory categorization has taken place. In an earlier phase, attempts have been made to re-frame (or define) the structure or to elucidate the structure in the field at that time. If there is any perceived unity then consolidation takes place; if there isn't any, then a categorization may be designed to show differences and dissimilarities.

> Principle 7: Confrontation with theory classifications either in terms of consolidation into a single theory or categorization into types is a major basis for modification of evaluation theories.

In educational evaluation, the late 1960's and early 1970's was a period of theory classification. The formation of the Phi Delta Kappa National Study Committee on Evaluation (Stufflebeam et al, 1971) was an attempt at theory consolidation. Others did not see consolidation

as possible and provided categorizations of evaluation theories (Worthen and Sanders, 1973; Popham, 1975; Stake, 1974). Attempts at categorization, in turn, prompted some theorists to reconsider and reconstruct their formulations. For example, Alkin has shown his reaction to the categorizations in articles in the last several years. An examination of two of his papers, "A New Role for Evaluators" (1977) and "The Title of This Speech is..." (1976) is helpful here. The papers indicate his reaction to the categorization of his earlier work as "decision oriented" evaluation. While the category title is not inherently distasteful or inappropriate, placing him in the category led him to perceive important differences. In reacting to decision-oriented evaluators and what people say decision oriented evaluation is, he reveals that he regards such an activity as too mechanistic--as appearing to be more straight forward. That it in fact is or should be. The category presents the illusion that there is always a decision and that evaluation information influences that decision in straight forward, immutable ways. He emphasizes that this is not the way he conceived of evaluation activities. (At least, thinking about it now, he doesn't think that is what he had in mind. Although, he concedes that if he were to read what he wrote he could see how people might have thought that his theoretic position would fit into that category.)

So, this phase represents another kind of confrontation--the confrontation with a category system. Here the theorist regards the categories as presenting an over-simplification of theoretic viewpoints which tend to emphasize elements of a theory which may no longer be felt

appropriate or which emphasize elements in a misleading way. Alkin wasn't reacting primarily to something he wrote, but to the categorization by others of what he had said. A theorist provoked by such categorizations can continue in the theoretical stream which is already moving. Having studied the categorizations, he could start off in a new direction.

Robert Stake provides another example of a theorist making a major change in theoretical formulation following the categorization stage within the evaluation field.[11] All of the categorizations attempted to classify his views based on the countenance model (1967). In response to this categorization phase, Stake began thinking about what he calls "responsive evaluation," evaluation which was akin to countenance evaluation but more person oriented.

Field-Based Theory Confrontation. Many evaluation theorists actually engage in the conduct of evaluations. Their continuing experience at these activities forms another basis for modifying evaluation theories. In essence, this may be thought of as a third confrontation

[11] A look at the status of theory development in evaluation, might provide a basis for declaring that there is little hope for theory unification. A point that should be made, however is that this is not deleterious--there is room for different evaluation views usually connoting different purposes. It is not a question of different approaches to the attainment of evaluation but rather different types of evaluation each really talking about different phenomena. The point that we would articulate is that non-unification of theories is appropriate unless it can be demonstrated that phenomena described are precisely the same. Let people develop their own theories at a level and in their own way and defend them with reference to the application domain of their own choice.

mode (in addition to confrontation with previous written work and with a classification.) We are proposing the principle of field based theory confrontation.

> Principle 8: Confrontation of evaluation theories with field based experiences is a major basis for modification of evaluation theories.

The recent appearance of a book by Michael Patton entitled Utilization Focused Evaluation, (1978) provides an example of a theoretical formulation which evolved from field based experiences. Rippey's Studies in Transactional Evaluation, (1973) appears also to be heavily field based. In actuality, most theories have a strong element of field-based-reality and perhaps we are only talking about distinctions in terms of degree or extent. House makes the point rather clearly in his remarks in the AERA symposium, "...we already are doing many things in evaluation that we have no real justification for. I felt rather deliberately that I wanted to construct some sort of rationalization to justify many of the things that we are already doing. It is allright to try to justify what in some cases we are already doing in practice. It is not a hypocritical position. The mode of knowing is much more a dialectical mode of knowing."

The Strategy of Collegial Dialogue

Up to this point we might describe a good deal of what we've seen as belonging to the social nature of evaluation theorizing. We point out how certain social relations with other theorists, both those within evaluation and those external to it, can provide a useful basis for the

modification of evaluation theories. We have characterized these social relations as relations of confrontation. Such a view is inadequate, however, for it fails to point out a more positive aspect of evaluation theorizing. Beyond the confrontation type activities lies the principle of theory development which we will refer to as the strategy of collegial dialogue. This theory development activity occurs when two or more theorists are jointly working on the same or similar set of ideas. In a given instance, the theorists may not be reacting to other people's ideas directly but are only working and encouraging each other. Interaction in theory development can serve as a reinforcement and encouragement especially when the other participant is someone who was developing similar ideas in almost a similar context.

> Principle 9: Evaluation theory development is often fostered by interaction with colleagues who have compatible points of view.

An examination of the collegial stimulation provided by Egon Guba and his role in theory formulation (evaluation theory in particular) is instructive. Guba, while a faculty member at the University of Chicago participated with Charles Bidwell in the development of administrative theory. Guba's insights into administrative decision making were an important input into the initial joint work in evaluation theory development conducted with Daniel Stufflebeam at Ohio State. Since moving from Ohio State, collaborative work at Indiana with David Clark has been fruitful. And, recently Guba and his Indiana colleague Wolf have been apparently a source of mutual support on matters related to naturalistic inquiry.

Other instances of the application of this principle are many--in fact the joint authorship of this paper by Alkin and Ellett is perhaps a prime example of such colleagial support in evaluation theory development.

The Personal Side of Theory Building

What has become apparent is that aside from the technical skills and social abilities of evaluation theorizing there is a personal dimension to theory building. Things like rational capabilities for theory development become mitigated by self-interest, pride or even politics. The reality is that human beings do the theorizing so that analyses of evaluation theorizing must pay attention to human beings--to the difficulties that they have in disavowing what they have believed, to their self interest, to their primary personal association, and to political questions. Given that such factors exist, it is easy to understand why theoreticians are constantly warned about letting their bias, prejudices, or other irrelevant factors enter into their theorizing activities. It seems that theoreticians must strive to eliminate all of the strictly personal aspects of their theorizing. But such a conclusion would be too hasty. For, the strictly personal aspects of the theoreticians activity, given proper safeguards, need not be an impediment to viable theorizing but may well faster it. The role of personal hunch, imagination, and intuition may serve the theorist in constructive ways. Given that the ideas and hypotheses suggested by the person's imagination (or intuition) are subjected to the proper tests, the person's imagination and intuition may be a profitable source of good ideas and play a major

role in the modification of evaluation theory. This leads us to the formulation of principle 10.

> Principle 10: Evaluation Theory development is conditioned by human beings, their associations, their motivations, intuitions and imaginations. (We shall refer to these as personal factors.)

Some years ago Daniel Stufflebeam (under the auspices of Phi Delta Kappa) convened a meeting of leading evaluation theorists to attempt to define a unified theory of evaluation. The work of this committee eventuated in a book on evaluation (Stufflebeam, et al, 1971) but failed to effect the kind of theory consolidation that had been envisaged by the sponsors of the committee. In part, this was a function of the choice of participants to the group; in part also the declination to participate by other advocates of different theoretical points of view may have been a strong factor in the failure to obtain better theory consolidation. The pattern of personal associations, self interests and motivations may well have been a major factor in that episode of evaluation theory development.

As another example of the importance of personal factors in evaluation theory development, we should note the recent Phi Delta Kappa study of evaluation theory currently conducted by Daniel Antonoplos and William Gephart is attempting to categorize evaluation theories based primarily on the pattern of personal associations and interactions of particular evaluation theorists.

Another illustration of evaluation theorizing which has been conditioned by personal factors--in this case, a person's intuitions--was found

in the previously discussed AERA symposium. Rippey's remarks illustrate how his reading of TNR resulted in his having (new) hunches or intuition of a plausible way of developing confidence testing. "Confidence testing seems to me, and seemed to me even on my first run through TNR to be a suitable methodology for studying evaluation as argumentation." Rippey's reactions need not have been shared by any other member of the symposium. The intuitions represent a personal response by him to TNR. Of course, such intuitions (or hunches) need to be tested out. But our point here is to emphasize the positive role which a person's hunches and intuitives can play in developing a defensible evaluation theory.

Combined Strategies

Theory reformulations take place based on combinations of factors--no single principle acts in isolation of others. That is, for example, a theory reformulation may be partially field based. Alkin feels that he was willing to accept intuitions from the field which he had previously rejected (based on false notions of what he felt was appropriate scholarship and admissable data to theory development.). In part, his willingness to accept field data stemmed from his dissatisfaction with the previous mentioned categorizations. The combination of confrontation with a categorization and confrontation with field practice (field based intuition) led to a totally new theory building thrust for him.[12]

[12]See: Alkin, M. C., Daillak, R. L., and White, P.S. White, Using Evaluations, Library of Social Research, #76, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, (1979).

Final Remarks

In this essay, we have been trying to show that evaluation theorizing should be thought of as a human activity which is governed by certain canons and strategies. In order to develop a viable theory, a theoretician uses these principles to help guide his theorizing. We believe that the benefits of conceiving of evaluation in this way are theoretical, practical, and pedagogical. We hope our initial effort will provide the grounds for further insights and future development of the conceptualization of evaluation as a human activity.

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